

Training of Extension Personnel for Transfer of Technology in Plantation Crops

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Introduction

Training has been widely accepted as a means of upgrading the professional competence of extension personnel. According to Misra (1990) training of extension personnel refers to planned and systematic effort to increase knowledge, improve skills and inculcate appropriate attitudes and develop other attributes in extension personnel to enable them to serve better their clients. Training equips the extension personnel in diagnostic, practical, and problem solving skills to deliver competent and professional extension service to the farmers. Therefore, training of extension personnel has an important role to play in the transfer of technologies evolved at various research centres to the ultimate users ie, farmers.

Since its inception the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (C.P.C.R.I.), a premier research organisation under ICAR, has evolved large number of technologies pertaining to the production, protection and processing of plantation crops such as coconut, arecanut, oil palm and cocoa. To be meaningful, the technologies generated are to be adopted by the farmers. Dissemination of technologies developed at the institute to the farmers is thus accepted as one of the mandates of C.P.C.R.I. A number of activities are undertaken for the effective transfer of technology by

the institute. They include organising training programmes for extension personnel on subject matter areas related to palms and cocoa, setting up research-cum-demonstration plots in farmers fields, organising kisan melas and exhibitions, publication of research and popular articles, arranging radio talks and publication of farm literature etc.

Training programmes organised by CPCRI

Taking into cognizance the significance of training as an important activity for effective transfer of technology, CPCRI has been organising systematic training

programmes for the benefit of extension personnel from development departments of various states and scientists from State Agricultural Universities dealing with plantation crops. In turn, it is hoped that the trained officials will take up educational activities in their respective jurisdictions to transfer the technologies to the farming community thereby providing multiplier effects to the transfer of technology efforts in plantation crops.

The details of training programmes organised by CPCRI during the last decade, ie, from 1984-85 to 1994-95 is furnished below :

Table 1. Scheduled training programmes organised by CPCRI

Sl.No.	Topic	Duration (days)
1.	Coconut production technology	6
2.	Coconut based farming systems	4
3.	Coconut nursery management	4
4.	Hybridization technique in coconut	4
5.	Pests and diseases of coconut	6
6.	Biological control of coconut pests	4
7.	Nematode pests and their control	4
8.	Rodent management	4
9.	Arecanut production technology	5
10.	Arecanut nursery management	5
11.	Oil palm production technology	9
12.	Cocoa production technology	4
13.	Cashew production technology*	5
14.	Vegetative propagation in cashew*	4
15.	Spice production technology**	5
16.	Disease and pest management in spices**	3

* now offered by NRC for cashew, Puttur

** now offered by IISR, Calicut

Much efforts are being taken by CPCRI for conducting the training programmes for the benefit of extension personnel. But the various development departments have not been fully utiliz-

ing the opportunities provided at CPCRI. *Table 2.* below shows the details of utilization of allotted seats under different training programmes conducted at CPCRI.

Table 2. Utilization of allotted seats under scheduled training programmes organised at CPCRI

Year	No. of seats allotted	No. of seats utilized	Percentage of utilization
1985-86	485	247	50.9
1986-87	445	205	46.1
1987-88	235	266	113.2
1988-89	265	137	51.7
1989-90	250	106	42.4
1990-91	240	85	35.4
1991-92	175	48	27.4
1992-93	235	100	42.5
1993-94	235	77	32.7
1994-95	250	225	90.0

From the above table it is evident that only 53 percent of the allotted seats were utilized during the period from 1985 to 1995. Various organisational constraints might be one of the factors preventing the sponsoring development departments from fully utilizing the training facilities provided by CPCRI. These constraints are to be delineated and corrective measures are to be taken up by the development departments so that better utilization of training facilities is made to render their extension service more effective.

Improvement in the desired knowledge, skill, and attitude of

the trainees which enable them to perform better in their job situation is one of the important indicators of the effectiveness of training programmes. The pre and post evaluation tests conducted to assess the gain in knowledge by the trainees due to the training exposure at CPCRI clearly establish the fact that the training programmes have been by and large effective in imparting the required knowledge to the trainees. *Table 3.* below gives the details of pre and post evaluation tests conducted for selected scheduled training programmes during 1994-95.

Table 3. Gain in knowledge by the trainees in selected training programmes conducted at CPCRI during 1994-95.

Sl. No.	Title of the training programme	No. of trainees	Mean test score	
			pre	post
1.	Production technology of coconut	11	44	66
2.	Nursery management in coconut	6	35	65
3.	Hybridization technique in coconut	21	24	85

The effectiveness of training programmes will be enhanced considerably if the trained extension personnel are provided adequate opportunities after the training to undertake appropriate educational efforts to transfer the technologies to the farmers. The extent of adoption of farm technologies will definitely depend among many other factors on the efforts taken to transfer the technologies to farmers. The efforts made and the constraints experienced by the trained extension personnel in the transfer of learning in their work situation is thus worth analysing. Selection of suitable trainees by the extension organisation is also an important factor influencing the effectiveness of training. Those extension personnel who can really utilise the training exposure for a better extension service owing to the agricultural situation prevailing in his area of jurisdiction as well as the nature of extension/development programmes being implemented, are to be deputed for different training programmes.

In order to streamline an effective training strategy due emphasis must be given to the training needs of extension personnel with respect to the subject matter areas to be covered, their preferences regarding the methodology of training, duration and period of training. It is also imperative that studies are taken up to analyse the perception of trainees about the effectiveness of training programmes already in vogue. Studies have already been proposed by the transfer of technology section at CPCRI with the aforesaid objectives.

Summary

As part of transfer of technology efforts systematic training programmes are being organised by CPCRI to benefit extension personnel on subject matter areas related to the production, protection and processing. Though substantial efforts are made by way of resources and personnel for

organising these training programmes the available opportunities are not being fully utilised by the extension organisations. Systematic studies to analyse the effectiveness of the current training programmes and the training needs and preferences of the extension personnel are to be undertaken to streamline an effective

training strategy for transfer of technology in selected plantation crops.

References

Misra, D.C. (1990) *New Directions in Extension Training: A Conceptual Framework*, Directorate of Extension, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi.

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